



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>

E 340
.C6 M85

HENRY CLAY AND
PAN-AMERICANISM



16 M85

HENRY CLAY AND PAN-AMERICANISM

AN ADDRESS DELIVERED BY

HON. JOHN BASSETT MOORE

NEW YORK CITY

BEFORE THE

Kentucky State Bar Association

AT

FRANKFORT, KENTUCKY

JULY 8, 1915

WESTERFIELD-BONTE CO., INCORPORATED, LOUISVILLE, KY.

E340
.C6M85

HENRY CLAY AND PAN-AMERICANISM.

Much has been heard in recent years concerning the relations between the United States and the independent countries in the South, collectively designated as Latin America. These countries, twenty in number, occupy, as is well known, the vast region formerly ruled by Spain and by Portugal; but the Portuguese dominions, though greater in extent than the connected continental area of the United States, are comprised in what was for sixty-seven years the Empire, but is now the Republic, or Brazil. The other nineteen countries were once colonies or provinces of Spain. When we speak of Pan-Americanism, we associate these countries of Spanish and of Portuguese origin with the United States, and thus link together in our thoughts all the independent governments of America. Is this a mere operation of the fancy? Is Pan-Americanism a reality or a dream? Is it, as is sometimes affirmed, an unnatural conception, altogether artificial and likely to perish; or is it a natural growth, capable of and perhaps occasionally needing artificial stimulation, but legitimately, inevitably springing from conditions, past and present, from which it derives and, if not unwisely tended, will continue to derive an ever-increasing substance? To these inquiries it is the purpose of the present address in some measure to furnish an answer.

Just a hundred years have elapsed since Simon Bolivar, living in exile at Kingston in Jamaica, wrote his celebrated prophetic letter. Defeated and driven from his native Venezuela; condemned to struggle with extreme poverty in a foreign land, he could hardly have been censured if he had sounded a note of despair. There was indeed little in the appearances of the time to justify the supposition that the Spanish colonies would become independent. The original revolt did not, as is sometimes hastily assumed, aim at separation. On the contrary, leveled against the alien government set up in Spain by Napoleon Bonaparte, it was ostensibly a loy-

145123 E340
2 C67M85

alist movement designed to support the authority of the son and legitimate successor of the monarch whom Napoleon had forced to abdicate. Owing to various causes, among which was the obduracy of the regency at Cadiz, it was gradually transformed into a movement for independence; but, even as late as 1815, this object had not been generally avowed. At that date not a single colony had formerly declared its independence of Spain herself; and there were perhaps comparatively few who grasped the fact that the former relations with the mother country could not be restored. It was only to the man of faith and of vision that the future was unrolled. Such a man was Simon Bolivar, the "Liberator." In the letter appropriately called "prophetic," he did not hesitate to declare: "The destiny of America is irrevocably fixed; the tie which united it to Spain is cut. * * * Because successes have been partial and fluctuating, we ought not to lose confidence in fortune. In some parts the supporters of independence triumph, while the tyrants obtain advantages in other places. And what is the result? Is not the New World vigorous, aroused and armed for its defense? We glance about us and see everywhere a light in the immense extent of this hemisphere."

While Bolivar thus chained his car to the star of independence, yet, being conscious of the uncertainties that overhung the future of the Spanish provinces in America, he did not seek to foretell the political principles which should prevail in them, or to speculate concerning the nature of the government or the governments which they would adopt. "I desire," he declared, "more than anything else, to see formed in America the greatest nation in the world, not so much by reason of extent and riches as by reason of liberty and glory." He did not, however, regard the union of the provinces under one government as practicable. Owing to their diversities of climate and of situation, the immense distances which separated them, and their characteristic and frequently conflicting interests, he conceived such a union to be impossible. Nevertheless, in his imagination he sought to foreshadow some measure by which harmony and con-

cert between the various parts might be brought about. He dreamed that at some future day the Isthmus of Panama might be for the nascent nations of the West what the Corinthian Isthmus was for the Greeks. "Would to God," he exclaimed, "that some day we might enjoy the happiness of having there an august congress of representatives of the republics, kingdoms and empires of America to deal with the high interests of peace and of war," not only between the American nations but between them and the rest of the globe.

At the time when these words were written there was only one country in America whose independence was proclaimed, acknowledged and established. This country was the United States. It stood then as the great beacon light to all peoples struggling for liberty and self-government. What was to be the attitude of the United States towards the struggling peoples to the south? Did the United States hold within its limits a man of broad and generous sympathies, a man of faith and of vision, who could look into the future and with hope and confidence predict for the provinces of Spain a destiny such as that which their own prophetic son had ventured to forecast?

There was just one man possessing in requisite combination these qualities and characteristics, and this was the bold, generous, high-souled idol of the adventurous west, vibrant with human sympathies and aspirations—Henry Clay of Kentucky. On July 9, 1816, a congress at Tucuman declared the United Provinces of the Rio de la Plata, of which Buenos Aires was the head, to be a free and independent nation. In February of the following year the Chilean revolutionists gained at Chacabuco a decisive victory which presaged a similar declaration. On December 6, 1817, Clay announced in the House of Representatives that he intended to move the recognition of Buenos Aires and probably of Chile. The national administration dispatched commissioners to inquire into conditions in South America, but on March 24, 1818, when an appropriation to compensate the commissioners was taken up, Clay sought to obtain an out-

fit and a salary for a minister "to the independent provinces" of the River Plate. This proposal he followed up on that and the succeeding day by a four hours' speech in advocacy of the cause of the revolutionists.

This speech was in some respects the most remarkable of his entire career. At the outset he expressed regret at being obliged to differ with many of his friends; but he consoled himself with the reflection that, if he erred, he erred "on the side of the liberty and the happiness of a large portion of the human family." He would not he protested, give just cause of war to any power—not even to Spain herself. He believed that the policy of the United States should be one of strict and impartial neutrality; but this was not, he maintained, incompatible with recognition. The United States having consistently acted upon the *de facto* principle, he contended that the United Provinces of the Rio de la Plata was an established government, deserving to rank among the nations. There being then, in his view, no valid ground of objection to its recognition, he avowed the conviction that there was no question in the foreign policy of the United States that had ever risen or ever could occur, "in the decision of which we had so much at stake." Depicting this country as "the natural head of the American family," he declared that the question "concerned our politics, our commerce, our navigation."

As to the nature of the governments which the independent countries of Spanish America might maintain, Clay showed himself to be anything but a narrow, destructive propagandist. While regarding the inquiry as one "highly important in itself," he frankly admitted it to be "a question * * * for themselves." Anxious as he was that their governments should be "free," we had, he said, "no right to prescribe for them. They were, and ought to be, the sole judges for themselves. He was strongly inclined to believe that they would in most, if not all, parts of their country establish free governments. We were their great example. Of us they constantly spoke as brothers, having a similar origin. They adopted our principles, copied our institutions,

and, in some instances, employed the very language and sentiments of our revolutionary papers." No matter, therefore, what forms they might adopt, he believed that their governments "would be animated by an American feeling and guided by an American policy. They would obey the laws of the system of the New World, of which they would compose a part, in contradistinction to that of Europe."

The allegation that the South Americans were "too ignorant and too superstitious to admit of the existence of free government," he denied. The eight years' revolution had "already produced a powerful effect." "Education had been attended to, and genius developed." But, even if the fact were otherwise, it was, he asserted, "the doctrine of thrones that man was too ignorant to govern himself." He conceded that the South Americans had not gone so far as could be desired in the direction of religious toleration, but we should, he said, remember that "everything was progressive." Even granting that they were ignorant and incompetent for free government, this was due to the execrable colonial system, from which they should be freed.

In his broad sweep of the horizon, Clay did not lose sight of the possibilities of commercial development, whose importance was relatively enhanced by the restrictions then existing on the trade of the United States with the British colonies.

It had been suggested that the United States might find in an independent Spanish America a great agricultural rival. This view he denounced as "narrow, selfish, and grovelling, as well as untrue." On the other hand, he held out the prospects, the realization of which the fatuity of later years had done all that was possible to defeat, that, when Great Britain should be at war, the United States would "engross almost the whole transportation of the Spanish American commerce." Nay, more; surveying the future with yet greater comprehensiveness and unhesitatingly assuming that, in respect of "European wars," the several parts of independent America would "stand neutral," he deemed it

to be of the utmost importance to them to adopt and observe "a liberal system of neutrality," which "all America" would be "interested in maintaining and enforcing."

On all these grounds Henry Clay pronounced the independence of Spanish America to be "an interest of primary consideration." His motion, however, to provide for a diplomatic mission to the River Plate was lost by a vote of 115 noes to 45 ayes.

For nearly two years the agitation in Congress concerning South America rested. In the interval the effort of the United States to obtain from Spain the peaceful cession of the Floridas was in progress. But, before the attainment of this object was fully assured, our great protagonist of South American independence returned to his charge; and on May 10, 1820, submitted in the House a resolution declaring it to be expedient to provide by law for the sending of ministers to any of the governments of South America that had established and were maintaining their independence of Spain. In the eloquent speech with which he supported this proposal, he did not hesitate to examine the subject in all its phases. Even the question of slavery, which had persistently disturbed the debates of the session, he did not forbear to discuss. Adverting to an intimation that the people of South America were "unfit for freedom," he affirmed that they were in some particulars "in advance of us." In one particular they were indeed "greatly in advance of us"; this was, that "Granada, Venezulea, and Buenos Aires had all emancipated their slaves." He "rejoiced that circumstances were such as to permit them to do it." Nor had they, he said, neglected education. They had "fostered schools." Newspapers were numerous. He had, he affirmed, never seen "a question discussed with more ability than in a newspaper of Buenos Aires, whether a federative or consolidated form of government was best." Rising, then, to the height of his argument, he exclaimed:

"It is in our power to create a system of which we shall be the centre, and in which all South America will

act with us. In respect to commerce, we should be most benefited. * * * We should become the centre of a system which would constitute the rallying point of human wisdom against all the despotism of the Old World. * * * In spite of our coldness towards them, * * * he had no earthly doubt, if our government would take the lead and recognize them, that they would become yet more anxious to imitate our institutions, and to secure to themselves and to their posterity the same freedom which we enjoy."

The opinion of "the friends of freedom in Europe" was, he declared, that the policy of the United States had been "cold, heartless, and indifferent towards the greatest cause which could possibly engage our affections and enlist our feelings in its behalf." He would no longer justify this impression. He would break the "commercial and political fetters" by which the New World had so long been confined. "Let us," he exclaimed, "become real and true Americans, and place ourselves at the head of the American system."

Clay's resolution was carried by a vote of 80 to 75; but, although this showed great progress, the contest was not yet won. The resolution only expressed an opinion in favor of diplomatic representation, but did not actually provide for it. A year later, on February 9, 1821, a motion for a suitable appropriation was lost by only seven votes. On the following day, however, Clay renewed his agitation, by presenting a resolution that afforded the House an opportunity, first, to declare its interest in the success of the South American provinces in their struggles for liberty, and secondly, to pledge its "constitutional support to the President" whenever he should "deem it expedient to recognize the sovereignty and independence" of any of them. A motion to lay on the table was lost. The author of the resolution at length felt the flush of success. With an independence as characteristic as it is refreshing, he disdainfully repulsed a cautious suggestion of doubt as to approval at home with the declaration that, if his constituents did not share his sentiments, "so help him God he would not represent

them." Both clauses of his resolution were carried—the first, expressing interest in the cause, by a vote of 134 to 12; the second, pledging constitutional support to the President, by a vote of 87 to 68. A year later, the President having communicated to Congress his opinion that recognition should no longer be withheld, an appropriation was duly made. The triumph of the cause was complete.

Almost two years later came the famous pronouncements in President's Monroe's message of December 2, 1823, constituting what has since been known as the Monroe Doctrine, the meaning of which is not inaccurately interpreted in the popular phrase "America for the Americans." When these declarations were made the danger of interference by the Allied Powers of Europe in the affairs of Spanish America had in reality passed away. But a great question still remained. Recognition had been accorded; but the character of the relations of the United States with the other independent countries of the hemisphere remained to be determined and defined.

In the consideration of this momentous question the figures of Bolivar and Clay again rise to pre-eminence. In a letter written at Lima on December 7, 1824, Bolivar, then, at the head of the Republic of Peru, suggested the holding of a conference of representatives of the independent governments of America at Panama. The object of the conference was declared to be "the establishment of certain fixed principles for securing the preservation of peace between the nations of America, and the concurrence of all those nations in defense of their own rights." Bolivar's invitation embraced Columbia, Mexico, Central America, Buenos Aires, Chile and Brazil. It did not include the United States. For this omission a sufficient reason may be found in the circumstance that the United States was not a party to the conflict then still in progress between Spain and her former colonies, but it has also been conjectured that the existence of African slavery in the United States was regarded by Bolivar as an obstacle to the free discussion of some of the matters of which the Congress might be obliged

to treat. However this may be, the first intimation that the presence of the United States was desired was made by the representatives of Columbia and Mexico in conversations with Clay, who had become Secretary of State. The President, John Quincy Adams, although he had warmly espoused the cause of the American nations as against any hostile projects of the Holy Alliance, felt obliged to proceed with caution, since the United States was maintaining in the Spanish American conflict a neutral position; but there can be no doubt that Clay warmly urged that the invitation be accepted. As has been seen, the idea of a common interest arising from a similarity of political principles had taken a profound hold upon him. He was in reality the great champion of this conception. He was, therefore, naturally fascinated with the proposal that the United States should take part in the Congress at Panama. His dream of a league of freedom seemed to be in process of fruition. The invitation to the Congress was accepted.

The President appointed as plenipotentiaries of the United States two eminent men, Richard C. Anderson of Kentucky and John Sergeant of Pennsylvania. Their instructions, dated May 8, 1826, were drawn by Clay and were signed by him as Secretary of State. Covering a wide range, they disclosed the broad and far-reaching views to which, in co-operation with the President, now a sturdy advocate of Pan Americanism, he sought to give effect. At the very threshold they declared that the President could not have declined the invitation to the congress "without subjecting the United States to the reproach of insensibility to the deepest concerns of the American hemisphere," and perhaps of a want of sincerity in regard to Monroe's solemn declarations. Moreover, the assembling of a Congress would, so the instructions declared, "form a new epoch in human affairs." Not only would the fact itself challenge the attention of the civilized world, but it was confidently hoped that the congress would "entitle itself to the affection and lasting gratitude of all America, by the wisdom and liberality of its principles" and by the establishment of a new

guarantee for the great interests which would engage its deliberations. At the same time the fact was emphasized that the Congress was to be regarded as a diplomatic body, without powers of ordinary legislation. It was not to be "an amphictyonic council, invested with power finally to decide controversies between the American States or to regulate in any respect their conduct," but was expected to afford opportunities for free and friendly conference and to facilitate the conclusion of treaties.

After these preliminary explanations, the instructions proceeded to point out that it was not the intention of the United States to challenge its "pacific and neutral policy." While, therefore, the Congress probably would consider the future prosecution of the war with Spain by the existing belligerents, the delegates of the United States were not to enter into the discussion of that subject, but were to confine themselves strictly to subjects in which all the American nations, whether belligerent or neutral, might have an interest. One of these was the maintenance of peace, which was declared to be "the greatest want of America." In regard to European wars, confidence was expressed that the policy of all America would be the same, that of "peace and neutrality," which the United States had consistently labored to preserve. On this supposition the greatest importance was, said the instructions, attached to questions of maritime neutrality. The delegates were to bring forward "the proposition to abolish war against private property and non-combatants upon the ocean," as formerly proposed by Dr. Franklin; but, as this might not be readily adopted, they were authorized to propose that free ships should make free goods and that enemy ships should make enemy goods, both rules being considered to operate in favor of neutrality. The delegates were also to seek a definition of blockade, and were besides to deal with the subject of contraband, whose vital relation to the preservation of neutral trade is, it may be remarked, not always fully appreciated.

In regard to commercial intercourse, the instructions incorporated the most liberal views. The delegates of

the United States were not to seek exclusive privileges, even as against the European powers. They were to observe the most-favored-nation principle, so that any favors in commerce or in navigation granted by an American nation to any foreign power should extend to every other American nation; and were to oppose the imposition of discriminating duties on importations or exportations on account of the flag. As for the Monroe declarations, the delegates of the United States, without committing the parties to the support of any particular boundaries or to a joint resistance in any future case, were desired to propose a joint declaration that each American State, acting for and binding only itself, would not allow a new European colony to be established within its territories. Another subject, closely related to commerce as well as to politics, was that of a canal to connect the Atlantic and the Pacific. Treating of this subject in a spirit of liberality, the instructions said: "What is to redound to the advantage of all America should be effected by common means and united exertions, and should not be left to the separate efforts of any one power. * * * If the work should ever be executed so as to admit of the passage of sea vessels from ocean to ocean, the benefits of it ought not to be exclusively appropriated to any one nation, but should be extended to all parts of the globe upon the payment of a just compensation or reasonable tolls."

In only one passage of this remarkable state paper did its author seem to labor. This was where he was obliged to discuss the troublesome question that so persistently marred the prospect in which his fancy loved to range. The Congress might perhaps consider the question of Cuba and of Haiti. With regard to the latter, he expressed the opinion that the subject was not one that required concert of action between all American powers. The case of Cuba was more complex. The United States, it was said, would prefer the unaided establishment of Cuban independence, but was convinced that the island was incompetent to sustain self-government without assistance. An independence guaranteed

by other powers, European or American, or both, would on the other hand, involve difficulties almost insuperable. Likewise fraught with danger was the design which rumor ascribed to Columbia and to Mexico to conquer and annex the island. Such an attempt would, declared the instructions, change the whole character of the war and involve continual fears as to the future stability of conditions. The delegates of the United States were therefore authorized to state without reserve that their government, having too much at stake to see with indifference a war against Cuba prosecuted in a desolating manner, or one race employed against another probably with the most shocking excesses, would be constrained to employ all means necessary to defend itself against the "contagion" of such near and dangerous examples.

Having thus dealt with a vexed question, the instructions passed to other topics. It was suggested that a joint declaration be made in favor of the free toleration of religious worship. If questions of boundary and other controverted matters among the new American powers should be presented, the delegates of the United States were to manifest a willingness to give their best counsel and advice, and, if it were desired, to serve as arbitrator. Finally, as to forms of government and the cause of free institutions, it was declared that the United States were not and never had been "animated by any spirit of propagandism." They preferred "to all other forms of government * * * their own confederacy"; but, allowing, as they did, "no foreign interference" either in the formation or in the conduct of their own government, they were "equally scrupulous in refraining from all interference in the original structure or subsequent interior movement of the governments of other independent nations."

The plans of the administration in regard to the assembly at Panama encountered in the Congress of the United States a determined opposition, largely due, as the records amply attest, to difficulties arising out of the question of slavery. So long was the departure of the plenipotentiaries of the United States delayed, that,

when they appeared on the Isthmus of Panama, the Congress had adjourned. For all practical purposes the Congress seemed to be a failure. But we commit a grievous error if we assume that great thoughts perish when some measure designed to make them effective falls short of immediate success. The ideal of the Panama Congress survived in various conferences held by the South American countries, but its fuller development was deferred till later years.

Meanwhile, the relations between the United States and the American countries of Spanish origin became such as to justify the belief that the conceptions of Clay lacked substantial foundation. The period succeeding the establishment by those countries of their independence was characterized by the disorders that attended their efforts to establish stable governments. Revolutions constantly broke out, and dictators rose to power whose acts seemed to falsify the dreams that patriots had cherished of liberty and fraternity. In 1846, the war between the United States and Mexico occurred. This conflict and the absorption of Mexican territory by which it was followed produced towards the United States, throughout all Spanish America, a feeling of distrust, the extent and depth of which have perhaps never been adequately appreciated in this country. There was created a sense of insecurity, which was greatly intensified by the numerous filibustering expeditions which set out from the United States for Mexico and Central America during the fifth decade of the last century; nor was this feeling of apprehension allayed by the recommendations made by the Executive to the Congress of the United States just prior to our Civil War for the occupation of Northern Mexico. Concert of action on the part of the Spanish American countries for protection against the United States was seriously considered, a general dread having overspread the former that they were drifting with the great colossus of the North into a position in which open and avowed hostility might become inevitable. The ideals, the lofty purposes, the broad and generous sympathies of Henry Clay seemed for the time

being to have perished. A new chapter in history was, however, about to be opened.

With the outbreak of the Civil War in the United States, the attitude of the government towards the countries to the South underwent an immediate and radical change. In this change the government's altered front towards the extension of slavery was a fundamental factor. But, beyond this, the people of the United States, who had been accustomed to point to the revolutions in Spanish America as proof of unfitness and incompetency for self-government, suddenly learned that no country was exempt from the possibility of internal disturbance. The language of the government also was completely transformed. Terms of kindness and respect took the place of epithets of opprobrium. In a word, the thoughts and aspirations that had animated the policies of Henry Clay began again to elevate and to dignify the utterances of statesmen.

One of the first tangible and substantial proofs of the radical change that had taken place was furnished by the Peace Conference at Washington, in 1870, which brought about the cessation of hostilities between Spain and the Republics on the west coast of South America. For five years a state of war had existed in that quarter. The United States sought by its good offices to terminate it. The conference met under the presidency of Hamilton Fish, who was then Secretary of State, and resulted in the conclusion of an agreement in the nature of a perpetual armistice, under which neither party was to commit any act of hostility against the other without three years' notice given through the Department of State of the United States.

Nine years later there broke out what is known as the war of the Pacific—a war between Chile on the one side and Peru and Bolivia on the other. In March, 1881, while this lamentable conflict was still in progress, James G. Blaine became Secretary of State. His emulation of the example of Henry Clay may have been stimulated by the circumstance that he spent some of his earlier days in the great State with which Clay's fame is forever con-

nected. That he sought to figure as the heir of Clay's political doctrines was a fact generally recognized. In regard to the policy of protection he was long known as the leading exponent of the "American system" of which Clay was called the father. Naturally, therefore, as Secretary of State, he sought to revive the ideal of an international American political system possessing traits and characteristics of its own.

In this spirit Mr. Blaine on November 29, 1881, issued to the independent governments of America in the name of the President an invitation to take part in a conference at Washington. This conference was to meet on November 24, 1882, "for the purpose of considering and discussing the methods of preventing war between the nations of America." Its attention was to be "strictly confined to this one great object." In issuing this invitation, the United States, it was declared, did not assume the position of attempting to determine existing questions, and for this reason a day was set for the assembling of the conference so far in the future as to leave room for the hope that by the time named the war in the Pacific would be ended. It was further declared that the influence of the United States so far as it might be potential would be "exerted in the direction of conciliating whatever conflicting interests of blood, or government, or historical tradition may necessarily come together in response to a call embracing such vast and diverse elements."

Because of the continuance of the war in South America, the invitation thus extended was subsequently withdrawn, but the project of a conference survived. Discerning men sagaciously espoused it, with a mind not merely to save it but to make it more comprehensive. Among these I may mention without impropriety, because he was the most active, the most insistent, and the most effective of all, an eminent member of the House from Kentucky, now governor of the State which he has so long and so faithfully served in positions of high responsibility, the Honorable James B. McCreary. On May 28, 1888, largely as the result of his persistent efforts, a

bill to authorize the calling of an International American Conference, having passed both Houses, became a law without the President's approval. Verily, the soul of Henry Clay went marching on!

It was my good fortune to be present, as an official of the Department of State, at the assembling of the first International American Conference on October 2, 1889. Its sessions covered nearly seven months, the final adjournment taking place on April 19, 1890. Its presiding officer, with a certain poetic justice, was Mr. Blaine, who had again become Secretary of State. Its labors covered a wide range, and were full of interest. Unfortunately, the contemporaneous action of the Congress of the United States in greatly increasing the rates of duty on imports discouraged the efforts of those who had hoped to bring about more liberal trade relations. The dramatic stroke by which Mr. Blaine at length secured the insertion in the new tariff of a clause looking to a limited reciprocity forms one of the best known incidents of the time.

It was once somewhat the fashion to decry the first International American Conference because only a few of its various professed objects were immediately accomplished. This shortsighted view was, however, chiefly propagated by those who were in the habit of decrying, on general adverse presumptions and without regard to the merits, all projects with which the president of the conference was prominently identified. Had nothing else been achieved, the resulting establishment of the international union of the American Republics would alone have justified the meeting. But the conference was fruitful in many ways. The International American Conferences have in reality become a permanent feature of the life of the independent countries of America. In 1901-2, a second conference was held in Mexico; a third conference was held in 1906 at Rio de Janeiro; and a fourth in 1910 at Buenos Aires. The fifth conference would have met in 1914 in Santiago, in Chile, but for the breaking out of the appalling conflict in Europe. The time was when Pan Americanism seemed to be most fitly emblemized by the orchid, a product wholly

ornamental, having no roots in the ground and suggesting the thought of artificiality. But gradually this emblem has ceased to be appropriate; and in its place may we not now take as our symbol the monarch of the forest, the oak, rearing its branches high in the air but sending its roots deep into the ground, and drawing both from earth and sky all the elements of a vigorous and useful growth?

We have seen that in the dreams of Bolivar and Clay the idea of a solidarity of political interests was predominant. So long as this condition continued, relations were necessarily incomplete. Sympathy follows association, and association naturally follows the line of our activities. One thing was yet needed to complete the circle of our sympathies, and that was the union of material with political interests by means of a more intimate commercial intercourse. To such a consummation there have heretofore been certain rigid obstacles. Our commercial relations with the countries of Central and South America have often been discussed as if trade could be brought about by a mere exertion of the will. Our manufacturers and merchants have been censured because they did not seek the trade of those countries. In reality, to say nothing of fiscal obstructions, the development of trade has been slow because conditions were not ripe for it. Not only has the United States, like other rapidly developing countries, been a great borrower, resorting to the same European reservoirs from which other American countries have been nourished, but its merchants and manufacturers have been preoccupied with their own rich and expanding home market, in which short credits and large profits exercised their inevitable fascination. These conditions have, however, been changing. The development of manufacturers has created a need of foreign markets, while the gradual accumulation of free capital has prompted attention to opportunities abroad.

That the American nations are alive to the advantages of co-operation in supplying each other's material wants can not be doubted. A demonstration, both origi-

nal and striking, of progress in that direction is furnished by the Pan American Financial Conference, lately held in Washington under the presidency of the Secretary of the Treasury. That its convocation was a happy thought is shown by the earnest, practical character of its deliberations, and the plans wisely laid for future activity. May the work thus auspiciously begun go steadily and prosperously on!

In conclusion, I venture to advert to a phrase too frequently heard in public places—the dictum that “commerce is war.” Catching phrases are notoriously misleading, often proving upon examination to be essentially fallacious; but this particular phrase I desire to put under the ban of Henry Clay’s denunciation as “narrow, selfish, and grovelling.” Trade, it is true, usually involves competition; yet competition when fairly conducted is to be regarded only as the stimulus of energy. Commerce properly viewed is an exchange of benefits. A great American statesman, one of the ablest statesmen, I may say, of recent times, the late Baron Rio Branco of Brazil, in a remarkable State paper, well observed that “arrangements in which neither of the interested parties loses, and still more those in which all gain, are always the best.” Commerce pursued in this spirit is unfriendly to no one. It is not unfriendly to Europe, or to any other part of the globe, but is, on the contrary, a fructifying influence, contributing to the prosperity and contentment of all. In this benign sense it found a place in Clay’s vision of a free, harmonious, united America, as the eventual abode of justice, peace and good-will.

684

05 37



3 2000 014 414 587



